[0039] At operation **606**, a request is received from a software application to access the document file. At operation **608**, the software application is checked to determine if the software application supports coauthoring. If coauthoring is supported at operation **610**, write access is granted to the software application at operation **612**. However, if coauthoring is not supported, because the document file has a long-term shared lock, the software application is denied write access to the document file and is only permitted to view the document file under read-only status. The long-term shared lock stays in effect until an explicit request is received at the server to reset the lock.

[0040] Although the subject matter has been described in language specific to structural features and/or methodological acts, it is to be understood that the subject matter defined in the appended claims is not necessarily limited to the specific features or acts described above. Rather, the specific features and acts described above are disclosed as example forms of implementing the claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A system for controlling access to document files on a document server, the system comprising:

one or more document files stored on a document server, at least one of the document files referencing a file lock stored on the document server; and

a document access processing module, the document access processing module comprising:

a file sharing processing module that determines a coauthoring status of a software application of a client computer requesting access to the document file; and

a file lock processing module that stores one or more file locks and that controls the setting and resetting of file locks;

wherein the document access processing module uses the coauthoring status of the software application and the file lock status of a document file to determine whether a software application is permitted to have write access to the document file.

2. The system of claim **1**, wherein a first file lock of the plurality of file locks represents that a software application that supports coauthoring has accessed the document file.

3. The system of claim **2**, wherein the first file lock has a timeout value.

4. The system of claim **3**, wherein the document access process module resets the first file lock when the timeout value is reached.

5. The system of claim **2**, wherein a second file lock represents that a software application that supports coauthoring has exclusive access to the document file.

6. The system of claim **5**, wherein the document access processing module resets the first file lock and sets the second file lock if a software application that supports coauthoring has write access to the document file and the document file includes features that do not support coauthoring.

7. The system of claim **5**, wherein a third file lock represents that a specific request has been received to lock the document file for shared access, the request being made when the document file is closed, and the request being made independently of a request by a software application to access the document file.

8. The system of claim **7**, wherein the document access processing module permits write access to the document file if the first file lock is set and one or more software applications that support coauthoring request access to the document file.

9. The system of claim **8**, wherein the document access processing module denies write access to the document file if the second file lock is set and one or more software applications that support coauthoring request access to the document file.

10. The system of claim **9**, wherein the document access processing module permits write access to the document file if the third file lock is set and one or more software applications that support coauthoring request access to the document file.

11. The system of claim **7**, wherein the document access processing module denies write access to the document file if any of the first file lock, the second file lock and the third file lock is set and the software application does not support coauthoring.

12. The system of claim **1**, wherein a second file lock represents that a software application that supports coauthoring has exclusive access to the document file.

13. The system of claim **1**, wherein a third file lock represents that a specific request has been received to lock the document file for shared access, the request being made when the document file is closed, and the request being made independently of a request by a software application to access the document file.

14. The system of claim **13**, wherein the document access processing module resets the third file lock upon an explicit request to reset the third file lock.

15. The system of claim **1**, wherein the document access processing module only permits one software application to have write access to the document file if the document file does not support coauthoring.

16. A method for controlling access to document files, the method comprising:

receiving a request from a software application to access a document file on a server;

determining a coauthoring status of the software application;

determining a file lock status of the document file;

permitting write access to the document file if the software application supports coauthoring and the file lock status permits coauthoring; and

denying write access to the document file if the file lock status permits coauthoring but the software application does not permit coauthoring.

17. The method of claim **16**, further comprising:

receiving a request for exclusive access to the document file; and

denying exclusive access to the document file if the file lock status indicates that coauthoring status or exclusive status has already been granted to another user.

18. A method for controlling access to document files stored on a document server, the method comprising:

receiving a request at a document server to set a lock that designates a document file for shared access, the request being made when the document file is closed, and the request being made independently of a request by a software application to access the document file;

setting a first lock for the document file, the first lock preventing software applications that do not support coauthoring from writing to the document file;